

# ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC MAGAZINE

## INTERVIEWS

JOHN WALLACE

EVELYN GLENNIE

FELICITY LOTT

ANTHONY BURGESS :

CONFESSIONS OF A FAILED MUSICIAN

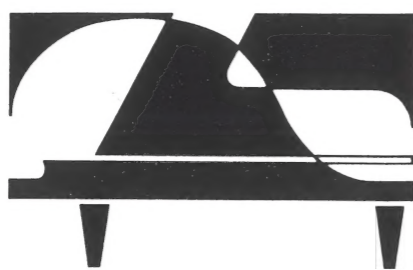
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# Royal Academy of Music Magazine

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If memory serves correctly, this is the eighth edition of the *Royal Academy of Music Magazine* since its relaunch in 1989. Nothing significant about that, you might think; but you'd be wrong. Even the most successful of magazine publishers will tell you that times are not what they once were, certainly not what they were before the latest recession took hold. Perhaps it's courting disaster to report that the *RAM Magazine* is going from strength to strength, not only in terms of the support it receives from its subscribers and advertisers, but also in the wealth of its contents. In this issue, we list Anthony Burgess amongst our contributors, alongside Anthony Storr, whose work on the psychological perception of music has challenged many of the myths that surround musical talent.

The message of Anthony Burgess's piece deserves repeating: that the problem facing young British composers is one of finding a genuine and original voice. Of course, many have; at least, they've been able to shake off the ties of 'Englishness' that inhibited all but the most cosmopolitan in the past. The Academy's own composition department has had a big influence here in recent years, not content merely to look over its shoulder to the spirits of a handful of revered masters, but concerned that composition students should hear and experience as wide a range of musical influences as possible.

The real problem for composers lies away from the conservatoires and university music departments, often the only promoters of contemporary music in a particular region. When it comes to the crunch – and the crunch has come – all but the most committed arts organisations are going to axe contemporary music from their programmes, obeying the laws of supply and demand but stifling new work. What chance now of finding a voice? The Society for the Promotion of New Music can only do so much, as can the likes of the Huddersfield and Gower festivals, trusts and private patrons.

As recession bites deeper into arts budgets and sponsors draw in their corporate horns, the 'right to fail' has increasingly been denied to all but the most established composers. In a perfect world, every work of artistic or scientific creation would be an instant success, a step on the road towards universal membership of Plato's Academy. Well, for those who might not yet be aware, the perfect world is far from reality.

For every Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms or Wagner, twenty, thirty, maybe a hundred other composers could be named whose work, however fine, has drifted into neglect. I'm not saying that the above quartet does not deserve to have found lasting fame, but is Wagner's *Rienzi* really so much better than Meyerbeer's *Le prophète* or Schumann's *Mignon*? The point here is that even the very best have produced works of limited value. The question of failure has little or nothing to do with a work's immediate popular or critical reception; any artist who reacts to a bad notice or poor audience response by altering their style is fooling only themselves. But we're fast approaching the situation where young composers are faced with the invidious choice of writing to suit popular taste or sticking to their guns in penury. Meanwhile, certain 'star' performers command fees that are hard to justify. Maybe there's nothing new in that and perhaps the garret really is the best spur for creative work after all, but it's difficult to sell the notion of the lone voice crying in the wilderness to talented musicians quite capable of making good money in the commercial sector. Without proper state funding for new work, so-called 'serious' music in Britain is in danger of stagnating into a museum art, its exponents caught on the treadmill of routine.

ANDREW STEWART

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## News Update

### People & Places

The official opening of the Duke's Hall (see article on pp.18-19) will take place on 20 November with a gala concert given by the Academy's Sinfonia conducted by Richard Hickox and sponsored by the 3i group plc. Other highlights of Duke's Hall activities this term include concerts and recitals given by Empire Brass, Robert Tear, The Alberni Quartet and an all-Russian programme given by the Symphony Orchestra conducted by Rudolf Barshai.

The Duke's Hall will be available for bookings from September 1992 onwards. All enquiries should be directed to Peggy van Luyn (071-935 5461 ext 243), who will be responsible for co-ordinating the bookings, issuing hire contracts and ensuring there are no clashes with the academic timetable.

### Sponsorship News

Many of the Academy's activities and events can only take place because of private financial support. The September 1991 issue of the *RAM Magazine* listed a number of initiatives for which external funding had been received for the 1991-92 academic year. Since then, further support has been forthcoming, for which the Academy is extremely grateful. These have included:

The performances by the Sinfonia in May in Castle Howard and La Salle Gaveau, Paris, made possible by the 3i Group plc, who are, additionally, sponsors of the Sinfonia until 1994.

The printed envelopes in which readers will have received recent editions of the *RAM Magazine*, provided by John Dickinson plc.

The Philharmonia Conducting Fellowship (Rudolf Barshai and Leonard Slatkin were the first two musicians to visit under this banner), bursaries for the Junior Academy and a five-year funding for the International Chair of



*Leonard Slatkin rehearses the Symphony Orchestra, June 1992. His two-day visit to the Academy, as Philharmonia Conducting Fellow, was made possible by the support of the Leverhulme Trust.*

*Photo: Rita Castle.*

Piano Studies (András Schiff), all thanks to the Leverhulme Trust.

Substantial computer equipment for the Academy's new Music Box scheme, which helps student careers and employment, very kindly installed by the Digital Equipment Company Ltd.

The new BMus (Performance) course, a subvention for three years from the Baring Foundation.

New bursary help from a number of individuals and organizations: the Laura Ashley Foundation, the Lorence Trust, Dixons plc, the

Austin and Hope Trust, Marks and Spencer plc and Mrs Claire Hunter.

The Communication Through Music course, enhanced in many ways with support from Guinness PLC.

Continuing annual support was received from Hermès (GB) Ltd, International Distillers and Vintners Ltd, the Princess Grace Hospital, the Friends of the Royal Academy of Music, National Westminster Bank, Yamaha-Kemble (UK) Ltd, Roland (UK) Ltd and the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation.

Finally, the Academy thanks Laporte plc, Britain's leading

### Festival with a difference

The last Composer Festival was in 1990, before the Duke's Hall closed for refurbishment, when Elliott Carter was featured composer in the American Music Festival. March 1993 sees the return of the Festival to the Duke's Hall. Whereas previous Festivals featured the work of one living composer, this year the Academy is honouring its own former students.

The Academy Composers Festival will feature the works of 40 distinguished composers – among them Nicholas Maw, Richard Rodney Bennett, John Tavener, Howard Blake, Michael Nyman and Paul Patterson. It will also feature numerous works by younger composers and by current students. A major attraction will be over 30 premieres or first London performances. Full details will be published in due course. This is the largest Festival ever mounted by the Academy, and one of the most extensive of its kind ever seen in the UK. It is made possible only through very generous support from two sources: IBM United Kingdom Ltd and the RVW Trust. Even at this early stage the Academy is very pleased to acknowledge their help, interest and enthusiasm.

speciality chemicals manufacturer, for their sponsorship of the Symphony Orchestra concert in St Albans Abbey in March, in association with the Rendell Trust.

## Honours & Awards

### Queen's Birthday Honours

DBE – Moura Lympny FRAM  
CBE – Trevor Pinnock HonRAM  
OBE – Steve Race FRAM  
MBE – Nona Liddell FRAM

### Honorary Members

Nicholas Danby  
Donald Mitchell  
John Eliot Gardiner  
Joseph Polisi  
Hakan Hardenberger  
Stephen Sondheim  
Paul Hamburger  
Tamas Vasary  
Gyorgy Ligeti  
Helmut Winschermann  
Yo-Yo Ma

### Fellows

Christopher Brown  
Richard Hickox  
Norma Burrowes  
Richard Watkins  
Evelyn Glennie

### Honorary Fellows

Peter Hemmings  
Lady Lumsden

In the Autumn 1991 issue of the *RAM Magazine*, the Honorary Fellowship awarded to Sir Rex Richards, Director of the Leverhulme Trust, was omitted. We are glad to rectify this oversight.

## Obituaries

We pay tribute to the memory of the following:

- ☐ Isabel Gray FRAM, 24 April 1992
- ☐ Olivier Messiaen HonRAM, 28 April 1992
- ☐ James Brown OBE HonRAM (Member of Professorial Staff 1966-87), 10 May 1992
- ☐ Sir Charles Groves CBE HonRAM, 20 June 1992

Marie Prost and Richard Wise on CMH tour of duty (see below)



## Reaching Out

*Graeme Humphrey, Director of the Academy's Communication Through Music Course, surveys the range of activities undertaken over the past academic year.*

The Communication Through Music Course has, during 1991-2, seen the benefits of enlightened support from the business community. The course, which aims to assist student development through contact with those disadvantaged sectors of the community for whom music plays an important role, began a two-year funding from Guinness PLC in September 1991 which enabled it to increase its activity significantly. The six keynote lectures have continued as before, but a more active community music programme has begun. The major project for the year was to record an entire Open University Course music module for the Royal National Institute for the Blind, involving some 12 Academy students in a demanding day of recording. Additionally, a beginner trumpet tutor was also recorded for an aspiring blind trumpeter. In 1992/3 we plan to record a number of further projects for the RNIB.

The Academy's contact with the Council for Music in Hospitals was greatly increased, with 24 concerts given throughout England by five specially auditioned Academy students. This direct live concert experience with the young and old, mentally and physically disadvantaged, has proved of significant value to the fortunate and devoted students concerned. Two concert parties visited Maidstone Prison where Mrs Mary Sisley (herself a former Academy student) does remarkable work in using music as a rehabilitative force in the reordering of the lives of sometimes difficult prisoners. There is considerable potential at Maidstone Prison for more work, and I am particularly keen to identify students with whom I can develop this in the coming year.

The subject of Music Therapy interests many students, and one of the annual talks is always on this fascinating subject. On 10 November 1992 the Academy has been invited to view the work of the Nordoff-Robbins Centre for Music Therapy in London, and all will be welcome to join our group for this exciting visit. Further details are to be found in the Academy's *Diary of Events* (where all the lectures are listed). Guinness's support has opened up a potentially huge range of activity for the Academy to put before students; a start has been made this year, although much more remains to be done in the coming years.

## Competitions & Scholarships

Yamaha-Kemble is inviting entries for the fourth annual Yamaha Music Foundation of Europe Scholarships, this year open to keyboard players. The scholarship scheme operates throughout Europe to foster new international musical talent, each year covering 16 countries with a total of 34 awards, three of which are intended for UK winners. The scheme is open to all music students, regardless of age or nationality, studying a traditional keyboard discipline (piano, organ or harpsichord) at an institute of higher education. Winners will receive £2,000 to be used for the advancement of their musical studies over one year. Entry forms are available from Yamaha-Kemble, Sherbourne Drive, Tilbrook, Milton Keynes MK7 8BH. Applications must be supported by a tape recording of two different works. The closing date for entries is 30 November 1992.

The Lansdowne Group of Companies, encompassing Lansdowne Studios and The Music Centre, Wembley, is one of the leading companies involved in the recording of music in Great Britain.

Lansdowne Studios, established in the 1950s, gained its reputation during the 1960s as a top recording studio and has gone on to achieve a world-wide reputation as a centre of excellence for the recording of television and film music. In 1987 Lansdowne Studios acquired the ownership of The Music Centre, Wembley. This complex includes full studios, the largest of which has long been considered the prime venue for the recording of large orchestral forces, chiefly for film sound tracks, such as the *Star Wars* series and, more recently, *Batman*. The state-of-the-art technology included in this group is some of the most advanced in the world.

In 1988, I approached Adrian Kerridge, Chairman of The Lansdowne Group, and suggested the possible creation of the 'Lansdowne Award'. I am keen to stress the vocational aspect of music education: having learnt the fundamentals of their art and craft at the Academy, all students, not just those on the Media and Commercial Music Course, need to have

maximum exposure to the practicalities and realities of making a living in the world of music. This would include working in recording studios in every facet of their careers. In most cases, this experience is normally gained as one enters into the professional world and can often be a baptism of fire. The *raison d'être* behind this award, therefore, is to expose the students at the Academy to the experience of working in a modern, complex recording set-up, hearing themselves as instrumentalists, performers and composers.

The entrants for the Lansdowne Award submit a composition or compositions of their own, together with an ensemble with which they have performed, and the winning entry has this work recorded with all the help of modern technical wizardry. During the course of a day at the Lansdowne Studios, all relevant students will be involved in a 'mock' professional recording session that features all the high-pressure components of the real thing. The winning student is presented with a trophy by Adrian Kerridge. Needless to say, the Academy is very grateful to the Lansdowne Group for this highly imaginative award.

Nick Ingman



Cliff Masterson (left), winner of the 1992 Lansdowne Award, pictured at Lansdowne Studios. Photo: Rita Castle.

The Evelyn Glennie Award for Percussion Composition is seeking entries from young composers of new works for percussion solo, percussion ensemble or accompanied percussion. The award is divided into two categories, for those born on or before 1 September 1974 and for those born since. Registration of entry should be confirmed by 31 December, with score and parts presented by 1 February 1993. Further enquiries to Paul Cameron, Professor of Percussion, Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, Twickenham TW2 7DU.



Former Minister for the Arts, Tim Renton, presents partners of Woolf Seddon, solicitors, with a Business Sponsorship Incentive Scheme Award for their first-time sponsorship of the November 1991 String Orchestra concert at the Academy. Photo: Sidney Harris.



Music to Medway.  
Council for Music in  
Hospitals (see below).  
Photo: Mike Abrahams.

The audience's appreciation of the Council for Music in Hospitals' concert at Medway in Kent was obvious from the very first note. The three young musicians – Clare Holmes (oboe and cor anglais), Sarah Warren (soprano) and Philip Sunderland (piano) – established an immediate rapport with the elderly day- and long-care patients. As Academy, their superb musical skills were taken as read. What perhaps was not expected was the ease with which they communicated with their audience with much warmth and humour. Their evening attire and confidence reinforced the message that this was a professional performance.

The artists' repertoire ran from classical works through such musicals as *West Side Story* and *My Fair Lady* to 'Songs from the 20s' such as 'Tea for Two'. There was even a chorus of *Happy Birthday* for one of the carers. Many of the patients joined in. And not only with the most well-known songs.

With live entertainment out of reach for much of the population, and a rare event indeed for patients in hospitals, this concert was warmly welcomed by patients and staff alike. The power of communication through music should never be underestimated. The artists were assured by the hospital's concert organizer that the positive effects on the patients would last for many weeks. Such was the enthusiasm for the performance that one elderly patient asked for the musicians' autographs. And, as Philip said, they may be worth a lot of money one day.

□ Jill Harris (Guinness PLC)

## Echoes from the Past

RAM Orchestral Concert, Duke's Hall, June 1941, conducted by Sir Henry J. Wood DMus FRAM

The programme included Senta's ballad from Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer*, soloist Ethel Lyon; Mozart's Piano Concerto in A, KV. 488, soloist Ivey Dickson; Vaughan Williams's *Songs of Travel*, soloist Clement Hardman, and the Schubert Concerto for cello and orchestra, soloist Peter Halling. Because many students were called away to active war service, the orchestra included a few students who had recently left and who were beginning to make their names in the profession. By today's standards, the concert was quite long, including also the overture to Mozart's *The Magic Flute*; two of Borodin's 'Polovstian Dances' and Elgar's *Variations on an original theme* Op. 36 ('Enigma').

FIRST VIOLINS			
Marjorie Lavers	Doreen Cordell	Nellie Ansermier	Ruth David
Rosemary Green	Patrick Halling	Eileen Harrison	Granville Jones
Felix Kok	Jorgen Laulund	Sheila Nicholson	Leslie Palmer
Jeanette Pearson	Rosemary Rapaport		
SECOND VIOLINS			
Ernest Scott	David Stone	June Hardy	Marjorie Lempfert
Mildred Litherland	Peter Mountain	Marion Packard	Joy Randall
Eileen Rodrigo	Colin Sauer	Eric Sawyer	Aurora Simpson
Audrey Taylor	William Tilley		
VIOLAS			
James T Lockyer	David Bellman	Elizabeth Cooper	Joan Hughes
Elza Jackson	Mary Peerless	Judy Pullen Baker	Stanley Popperwell
Arthur S Quaife			
VIOLONCELLOS			
Peter Halling	Terence Weil	Margaret Ahrens	Nancy Barker
Sylvia Bor	Alice Fortune	Joy Hall	Beryl Parkinson
Nancy Strudwick	Denis Southard		
DOUBLEBASSES			
Adolf Lotter	T. Blackwell	Margaret Fairfax	Doris Greenish
Charles Gray	John Walton		
FLUTES			
Edward Walker	Gareth Morris	E Joan Walker	Edward Walker (picc)
OBOES			
John Black	Michael Dobson	Joan Nicholl	J W Whitaker
COR ANGLAIS			
	J W Whitaker		
CLARINETS			
	Henry Scott	Margaret Latutin	David Till
BASSOONS			
	Ronald Waller	C. James	A. Penn
HORNS			
	C. H. Gregory	Francis Bradley	John Burden
	Robin Davidson	Paul Engel	Ella-Mary Jacob
	Bernard Brown	Denis Egan	Hugh Herron
TRUMPETS			
	Bramwell Wiggins		
TROMBONES			
	F E Stead	Richard Scrogg	W. H. Coleman
TUBA			
	F E White		
TIMPANI			
	Clarence O'Neill	Terence Lovett	James Illiff
PERCUSSION			
	Basil Bensted	Alan Hooper (Harverson)	
	Hans Wurmman		
HARPS			
	Mignon Frossard	Cherry Isherwood	Basil Bensted (Organ)

## The Sinfonia plays Paris

Well, it sounds good, and it was good! Asked by the 3i Group plc (the Sinfonia's sponsor) if we would contemplate a visit to Paris in May 1992 under their aegis, we naturally jumped at the chance. The trip was finally given the go-ahead in January; a few days later the charming nineteenth-century recital hall, La Salle Gaveau, was booked, and soon the mighty RAM machine – last seen to great effect in the Korea 91 tour – was cranking into motion.

We made arrangements with the Paris Conservatoire for one of their leading pianists, Philippe Guisiano, to play the Saint Saëns Second Piano Concerto in La Salle Gaveau, and for one of their leading cellists, Valerie Aimard, to play Shostakovich's Cello Concerto in the lunchtime recital the next day, in the Conservatoire itself. Both concerts passed off splendidly, thanks to the soloists, to Colin Metters the conductor, to the accomplished ensemble playing of the orchestra – Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* Suite and Mendelssohn's *Italian* Symphony were also on the bill – and, not least, to the arrangements made on our behalf by the Paris office of 3i (who enjoyed the company of 800 guests in La Salle Gaveau) and by the staff of the Paris Conservatoire. We are grateful to all those made the visit possible.

Nor must I forget the concert that preceded Paris by a week – on a beautiful summer's evening in the magnificent setting of Castle Howard, with Amy Claricoates as the Shostakovich soloist – and the concert that concluded these peregrinations – in the Academy, with Haruko Seki as the Saint Saëns soloist. They, too, were memorable events. Where next?

□ Peter Shellard

## The Strauss Factor

When she sings the music of Richard Strauss, even the greybeards find it hard to recall a time when it was ever better. Kate Hardy talks to Felicity Lott about her stage career.

It is unseemly to lapse into idolatry in the first few sentences of an article – not, however, when the subject is Felicity Lott. Hardened tycoons have been known to reach for the Kleenex when she appears on stage. Music critics – that unloving and unlovely band – are all too frequently discovered searching in their compendium of superlatives or waxing rhapsodic about 'fragile beauty', 'effortless elegance' and 'silvery tone'.

There is only one dissenting voice. It details an inclination to "drift about slowly, trying not to knock things over", a tendency to sound "terribly screamey" (as Christine at the beginning of *Intermezzo*), expatiates about doubts over tone-colour, talks of a horror of auditions. Who is this vile detractor? None other than the lady herself, her excessive modesty exceeded only by her abundant charm.

She learned piano and violin as a child in Cheltenham and took singing lessons from the redoubtable Ursula Hughes, who died last year. "She told me I was much too young to have actual singing lessons and instead taught me breathing techniques to strengthen my diaphragm." Despite this auspicious beginning, Lott had no plans to take up music professionally. But she continued her musical activities while reading French at Royal Holloway College and it was here that a far-sighted singing teacher persuaded her to audition for the Royal Academy of Music. She won a scholarship.

Lott attended the RAM from 1969 to 1973, and the critical fraternity first began to sit up and beg when she appeared in Academy productions – *Pamina* in 1971, *Rosmena* in Handel's *Imeneo* in 1972 and *Dorabella* in 1973. The Principal at the time was Sir Anthony Lewis and it was probably his influence, as an acknowledged expert, that led to a preponderance of Handel and Mozart in the repertoire.

She remembers her teachers fondly, particularly Olive Groves and Flora Nielsen whom she recollects as the "quintessence of gentility". Lott reserves her kindest words for John Streets, her vocal interpretation coach. "He was great. I liked him very much. He ran the opera class. We did one major

production per year and two workshops where we performed excerpts from works like *Penelope* and *Louise*." Although she trod the boards in her years at college, Lott received no orthodox dramatic training. This is not something that she considers a disadvantage. "You pick up ways of moving and body language when you are in rehearsal and on stage. Theorizing doesn't teach you anything about reality."

Even though she enjoyed her experiences at the RAM enormously, Lott had not decided on making a career in opera when she graduated. "I thought of myself as an oratorio singer or perhaps doing recitals."

Her first engagements on leaving the Academy were, however, operatic and she found herself continuing to perform Handel and Mozart. She sang *Seleuce* in *Tolomeo* and the title role of *Arianna in Creta* for Unicorn Opera and Abingdon Opera, and Donna Elvira and *Fiordiligi* for Leicester University Opera. While she was at Leicester, Lott was snapped up by talent scouts from the English National Opera. This eliminated the need for auditions, which she abhors: "They're a nightmare", she admits. "I've only ever done one decent audition and that was for *The Rake's Progress* with Bernard Haitink at Glyndebourne. He was so nice. He told me how much he hated trials of this sort and, as a consequence, made me feel incredibly relaxed. The hall had a wonderful acoustic and, almost for the first time, I didn't feel nervous."

As a regular performer at ENO, Lott began to develop her knowledge of twentieth-century repertoire. She made her Covent Garden debut in Hans Werner Henze's *We Come to the River* in 1976. The following year, after

that "decent audition", she sang Anne Trulove for Glyndebourne. Now that Felicity Lott is as familiar in that setting as the interval picnic, it seems astonishing to think that she auditioned three times unsuccessfully for the chorus before she was offered the chance to sing the Countess in *Capriccio* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera in 1976. John Cox's production was her first role in an opera by Richard Strauss and marked the start of a life-long love affair with the composer. "The repertoire that I had been



A mastersinger at work: Felicity Lott makes her debut as Eva in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* at Covent Garden, March 1990. Photo: Clive Barda.



'Take this silver rose'. Lott as the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier*, from John Schlesinger's Covent Garden production, June 1989. Photo: Clive Barda.

doing was, in the main, so structured and required such precision with *coloratura*. Strauss seemed much more fluid, expansive and free. You can get carried away on a flood of emotion, which is something you can never do in Mozart."

The meeting with John Cox, now production director at Covent Garden, also proved invaluable. "I was lucky to get to know him through *Capriccio*. When we first met I was pretty gawky and I hadn't done much. He gave me enormous confidence. He also gave shape to Strauss's music. I've done one or two other productions of the work since then, but John's is the most perfect."

Lott's name is almost synonymous with Strauss's these days, yet she did not perform in another opera by the composer until 1980, when she took the role of Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*. In the interim she continued to sing Mozart and Handel and French opera throughout Europe. But after the Glyndebourne *Rosenkavalier* it became apparent that Lott had found her real vocation.

She first sang Christine at Glyndebourne in 1983. Although the role is a scarcely disguised portrait of Strauss's shrewish wife, Lott has a great deal of sympathy for the character. "Strauss clearly adored his

Strauss and Mozart." There are those that would argue that Lott is fairly 'secure' with lieder singing too. She performs to enormous acclaim as a solo artist and also regularly teams up with fellow Royal

Academy student, Ann Murray. They met while taking part in the Song-makers' Almanac, founded by yet another RAM alumnus, accompanist Graham Johnson. Lott finds the 'warts-and-all' climate of the concert hall nerve-racking, but is shrewd in her appreciation of the value of such exercises. "Recitals create a bridge between the opera house and the concert platform."

She has recently been asked to consider the role of Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* and a Sieglinde has been mentioned, but her reluctance to chance her arm means that she is "sticking to Strauss".

Any sense of disappointment about Lott's conservatism is immediately outweighed by the knowledge that her existing repertoire, in particular that by Richard Strauss, will continue to take her to "beautiful opera houses throughout Europe to sing ravishing music".

that by Richard Strauss, will continue to take her to "beautiful opera houses throughout Europe to sing ravishing music".

• Kate Hardy is Deputy Editor of Opera Now.



As Countess Almaviva (left) in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, with Marie McLaughlin (Susanna), Covent Garden, December 1991. Photo: Clive Barda.

wife. He wouldn't have given Christine so much beautiful music to sing otherwise." Nevertheless, she acknowledges, "It's a fiendishly difficult part to learn." Her facility for languages stood her in good stead when she had to learn the role in German for the 1988 Munich Festival. "I didn't really speak German but actually learning the role gave me enormous confidence in the language. I worked in Munich for six weeks, which meant that I literally had to speak German." Her next seminal role was Arabella for Glyndebourne in 1986 and in the same year she sang the Marschallin for the first time in Brussels. "I do love Arabella. It has such beautiful and indulgent music."

Unfortunately she has always fought shy of Puccini and Verdi roles. "I know it is pathetic of me not to try but I'm too scared to test my wings. At least I'm secure with

## Confessions of a Failed Musician

*Even the greatest composers have struggled to find a voice. Anthony Burgess reflects on a career that could have been and that, no doubt, would have been, if he had only cracked the musical language barrier.*

My connection with the Royal Academy of Music is remote, historic, almost legendary. I took the examination in Speech and Drama, as an external candidate, in 1950, passing the written papers but failing ignominiously in the oral tests. At the same time I was examined at the Royal College of Music in Theory and Composition and did badly in both the written and the oral parts. At that time I had a luxuriant beard, not all that common, and it used to provoke giggles from barmaids and waitresses. I think it offended my oral examiners, but not as much as my ignorance, on the one hand, of voice projection, and, on the other, of fugue and figured bass.

I mention these failures to show that not even the most burning aspiration necessarily meets success, and to indicate a distressing split in my mentality. Language and music have attracted me equally, and it would have been better if I had been on fire with one only. My father was a professional musician in that he played the piano for money in the old music halls (indeed, he once accompanied both Charlie Chaplin and Stan Laurel) and in the cinema. My son is a professional musician in that he plays the oboe in whatever orchestra will have him and sometimes earns a fee delivering the cor anglais solo in the slow movement of Dvorák's 'New World' Symphony. I stand in the middle, sag rather, earning my own living from writing books. I would much rather be starving in a garret with a wad of unplayed symphonies and string quartets.

God knows I have tried to be a reputable composer. In 1975 I had a symphony performed in Iowa City. In 1982 the BBC and Irish radio broadcast my three-hour setting of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, entitled *Blooms of Dublin*. The now defunct critic Hans Keller raged at this as brilliantly incompetent. In France I have had my Concerto Grosso for four guitars and orchestra performed, to some acclamation. To my surprise I notice that my second guitar quartet has been recorded on CD and is even on sale. I have composed for the three great harmonica-players of our time – Tommy Reilly, Larry Adler, and the late John Sebastian. For the last I composed a Sonata for harmonica and guitar, a highly portable combination. I seem to have been thrown into a quite unexpected specialization, for I have no respect for either instrument. The only instrument with which I wish to succeed is the multiple one called the symphony orchestra.

I suppose, being drawn to both words and music, my true line ought to be opera. I have written two

libretti – one for the revived Weber extravaganza *Oberon* – and the other to celebrate the bicentennial of the French Revolution in Paris. This latter opera, whose music was abominable and, thank God, not mine, was performed by puppets. Now, in old age, I contemplate the writing of both words and music for an opera based on the life of Sigmund Freud. Freud, when you come to think of it, is an ideal subject for an opera. He discovered the unconscious mind and so, in a sense, did his contemporary Arnold Schoenberg. Schoenberg's highly intellectual serialism is the construct of a highly conscious mind, but it sounds like the unconscious, with the id battling away with the super-ego. The trouble with turning Freud into a cantorial baritone is that he has

to lose his voice, through oral cancer, halfway through the story. No problem, if you hand his lines over to the soprano daughter Anna Freud, but something of an evasion in terms of dramatic thrust.

With such an opera a lot of musical problems could be solved. The orchestra in the pit, very big, very Richard Straussian, could be entrusted with the depiction of the unconscious mind – the final justification for the wild discord and unstructured pseudo-melodic lines. The conscious Vienna of coffee-houses, polkas, galops, waltzes

and vocal *schmaltz* could be left to a smaller orchestra in the wings. This would be an expensive undertaking and I cannot, offhand, think of a great baritone who would be willing to sing his Freudian heart out in Act One and go about mumbling and yelping with pain in the second and third acts, though permitted to recover his voice in a final dream, in which with Mosaic thunder, he denounces his defecting followers – Jung, Adler, Ferenczi and the rest. Jung would have to be a Swiss tenor, and I do not know of any Swiss tenors. Pavarotti would not do for the part: Jung was thin and athletic.

Any musician, real or pseudo, must faint at the mere physical prospect of getting an opera on paper. I have, all ready for the Freud task, two thousand sheets of thirty-stave paper waiting to be defiled with black dots. The real problem, however, is not physical, daunting though that aspect is, especially to one with my senile debility; the problem is linguistic in the sense that nobody knows these days what precisely the language of music is. In Mozart's time there was no distinction between the popular and the elevated: a popular song was tonal, with its tonics and dominants, and so was an opera or a symphony. The melodic in both the popular and the elitist

*"There was an uneasy feeling among all British musicians that we were behind the times, that the music not just of the future but of the present too was foretelling war and the death camps."*

varieties of music adhered to a known and accepted tradition. Up to *Le Sacre du Printemps* in 1913, and even including it, you knew where you stood. We can all hum and whistle fragments from *Le Sacre* (it's all fragments really), but, from 1912 on, we've also had to confront the submelodic as represented by Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*. We in England resisted the atonal and serial trends. In 1935, when, as a schoolboy, I attempted my first symphony, I had the examples of Vaughan Williams and Walton to encourage me in the exploitation of tonal melodic lines, but, even then, there was an uneasy feeling among all British musicians that we were behind the times, that the music not just of the future but of the present too was foretelling war and the death camps. Our insularity is imposed on us by the mere fact of being an island.

Composing an opera on Sigmund Freud is not really a suitable task for a British writer-musician. My libretto, what there is of it, is in German anyway (done with the kind assistance of a genuine Viennese). The music has to be Viennese – Schoenbergian or Straussian or both. The job of British operatists is to musicalize British themes – as Harrison Birtwistle has done with the *Gawain* legend. Benjamin Britten, true, took a German novella for his *Death in Venice*, but he was happier with Crabbe, Shakespeare, and Henry James. I suppose the problem confronting any young British composer

today is that of reconciling his inborn insularity with the great Continental call.

In fact, the composition of any kind of serious music at all is a task to be undertaken in consciousness of an unhealable schizophrenia. My son has taken to the playing of the great bass recorder, and I do not find it difficult to compose sonatine for him – thoroughly tonal, with dissonances as diatonic as anything in Holst or Vaughan Williams – and, in composing for the French guitar quartet that I've adopted, or has adopted me, I know that the nature of the instrument forbids the sailing off into atonal anarchy. But, given the commission to compose a symphony, what precisely is one's idiom? Dare one go back to an unequivocal C Major? No, here is Pierre Boulez frowning at us (though, these days, he is tending to frown at himself). We are in an unpleasant position. When I read

words I know where I stand. When I attempt music I have no steady language to draw on. I hope, one of these days, to read in one of the musical magazines (like yours) that Hans Schneevogel or Magnus Lieberstraum has just completed an opera on the career of Sigmund Freud. That will save me the trouble of doing it myself. But nothing saves us from the trouble of deciding what the appropriate language is for a British composer. My failure as a musician is partly the failure of the whole nation.

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*"I suppose the problem confronting any young British composer today is that of reconciling his inborn insularity with the great Continental call."*

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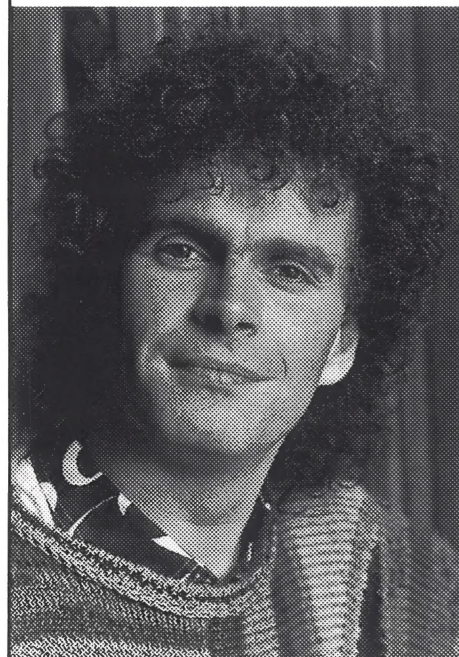
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## Seattle do nicely

*The conductor's lot may look a happy one, but, as Stewart Kershaw explains, it's not just about waving your arms around.*

**I**t is a January morning in Seattle and, as I sit in my study looking out over one of the world's most beautiful harbours, I marvel at the view while reminding myself of a complicated day ahead, which will end with an overnight flight to Houston some 2000 miles away. Rain is forecast, so I compare the winter climate here to extremes of cold to be found elsewhere in the USA at this time of the year.

First there are two rules for a Monday after a weekend of performances when everyone else has had ample time to create today's problems: never answer the telephone before 9.00am, and find time to read the newspaper over a hot coffee before the onslaught begins.

For once the Agony Column strikes my attention because of its remarkable heading 'WIFE'S ACCORDION PLAYING HAS HUSBAND AT WITS END'. On reading further, I discover that this gentleman, after 30 years of marriage, is still bothered by the fact that his wife surprised him on their wedding night by unpacking an accordion and serenading him with *Lady of Spain* and an old English madrigal with ribald lyrics. This poor man's wits really were at an end because her repertoire had never changed over the years and, to make matters worse, she would on occasion be joined by two friends, one of whom "rapped his knuckles on his head while opening and closing his mouth to produce changes of tone" and the other "clacked two spoons together while humming the harmony". His complaint ends with a plea for help and the heartbreaking understatement that "I've had about all I can take of this". I decide to send copies of this masterpiece to all my friends in need of musical or marital encouragement.

By 10.00am I have received calls from Houston concerning two lady violinists who had decided to fight out their differences on the floor of the musicians' lounge; from Washington's Kennedy Center questioning the need for saxophones in next month's Charles Ives' concert; an invitation to conduct some 'Swan Lakes' in May, which I happily turn down citing other commitments as an excuse; finally, there is a request from a neighbour that, as much as they love classical music, could I please turn down the volume after 11.00pm?

I drive the three miles to the studios while worrying that the Seattle Opera House pit may be defeated at this evening's rehearsal of a work that requires a singer, full strings and brass, quadruple winds, two harps, celesta, timpani plus five percussionists performing on anvils, ratchets, whips, cowbells, side-field-bass drums, assorted cymbals, triangles, tam-tams, tambourines, xylophone, marimba, vibraphone, glockenspiel, tubular bells, wind-machine and a SIREN.

I reflect quietly on the moment in the score where the conductor is exhorted to produce a 'Climax of Climaxes' – I surmise that, if the composer were Iraqi,

then the terminology for an event of such epic proportions would be 'Mother of all Climaxes'. For consideration also is the instruction to the musicians that they stamp their feet with the final chord – I must remind them to wear hard shoes.

Spend an hour with the soprano soloist accompanied by the sound-engineer whose task it will be to balance her voice with the anvils, etc. Over another cup of coffee I ponder the absence of clacking spoons in the arsenal available to the composer, but conclude that the omission will not be detrimental to the success of the work.

Next I meet a choreographer who has the Fauré *Requiem* in mind for next season, but convince him that Fauré's design is pure perfection and that the work's architecture should not be crippled in the cause of ballet. I reserve deadlier verbal ammunition for a later date if he is still convinced that Fauré was wrong.

Return home to more messages, listen to some Webern to clear the mind and then sleep for an hour. I pack my suitcase in nine minutes while putting scores, batons, clean shirt and socks into the carry-on bag lest the larger case is diverted to Tokyo or any other destination not mentioned on my ticket. Leave for the Opera House and yes, the rehearsal does start late despite the percussionists' valiant and noble attempts to squeeze the inevitable into the impossible.

All comes to a cheerful end at 9.00pm and I drive myself to the airport suspecting for a moment that a police car is right behind me – in reality my ears are still ringing from the siren in the pit. The plane as usual is late, but take-off is finally achieved and I begin to think about John Adams's *Fearful Symmetries* for tomorrow morning's rehearsal in Houston.

As I settle in for the long flight I close my eyes with the happy realization that the telephone will not ring at 35,000 feet and that I am not married to an accordionist whose repertoire is limited to *Lady of Spain* and a ribald English madrigal.

- Stewart Kershaw (1962) is currently Music Director for the Ballet Companies in Seattle and Houston. His is also a guest conductor with various symphony orchestras in the USA, Canada and Europe.

## Never judge a song by its cover

*Today's sheet-music publishers would faint at the idea of paying artists to illustrate the front cover of a two-bit pop song. Time was when even the most dreadful tunes were dressed up in colourful wrappings. John A. Parkinson tells the story.*

While working in the British Library and collecting material for my book *Victorian Music Publishers*, I was first attracted to the hobby of collecting Victorian music covers. This is a fascinating occupation, as that eminent trade unionist Ron Todd and many others can testify. It is a hobby which lights up many aspects of Victorian life and its social background and affords many perspectives on a vanished world – by no means confined to the musical side.

The invention of lithography by the Bavarian actor and playwright Hans Senefelder in the late eighteenth century revolutionized the music printing and publishing industry. Senefelder came to England in 1800 and published an account of his work in *A Complete Course of Lithography* (1819). Previously the engraving process had mainly been used for printed music, and continued in use throughout the nineteenth century, but the lithographic process made it possible to produce pictorial titlepages of great variety and artistic value. The earlier examples are in black-and-white only, but the advent of chromo-lithography around the 1850s heralded a brilliant burst into colour.

One of the pioneers in this field was Louis Jullien, composer, conductor, impresario and publisher, and one of the most colourful personalities of his time. He was born in 1812 and began his career as a conductor of dance music in Paris. After going bankrupt in 1838 he started afresh in London, conducting concerts at Drury Lane and the Lyceum, containing a mixture of classical and popular music. He composed a number of quadrilles and waltzes which were very successful, but he over-reached himself in 1847 when he took a lease on Drury Lane for a season of opera on such a lavish scale that it re-

sulted in his bankruptcy. His portrait appears on the *Valse d'adieu; a Farewell to England*, published on his departure for America. After a successful concert tour he returned to England and resumed his concert performances, but suffered an irreparable loss when all his music perished in a fire at Covent Garden in 1856. Sadly he ended his days in a lunatic asylum in Paris. The illustrations on the covers of his dance music are some of the finest of the whole period and are much sought after by collectors.

The principal artist of the time was John Brandard, whose signature appears on innumerable covers. Many of the famous performers – Alboni, Grisi, Jenny Lind, Sims Reeves – were portrayed by Brandard in their famous operatic roles. Other artists include Augustus Butler, who specialized in military scenes, Maxim Gauci (whose subjects included Paganini and Madame Vestris), Alexandre Laby, who specialized in sacred song titles and, most popular of all, Alfred Concanen. Concanen was the most prolific and versatile of the music illustrators; his name is associated with such famous music hall artistes as The Great Vance and George Leybourne, whose appearance and character he immortalized. Champagne Charlie is the most celebrated of his portraits of Leybourne.

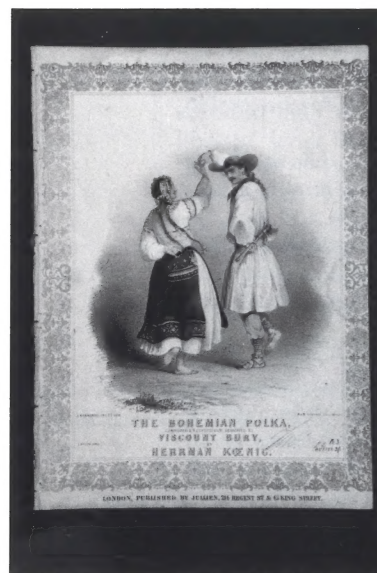
Concanen was of Irish descent, a colourful character, short of temper but generous with his money. His chief pleasure was to walk the streets of London giving pennies to poor children whom he would sketch at play. To him we owe a picture gallery of scenes and characters of a long-vanished era.

Royalty figured frequently on these title pages. A royal wedding was immediately celebrated with a waltz bearing the appropriate portraits. Other notable events – battles, deaths, disasters – were equally taken as the subject of music covers. Gilbert and Sullivan fans still keep a keen look-out for the covers which followed the appearance of each new opera and which furnish evidence of the staging and costumes used at the time. Famous books such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* gave rise to many illustrated covers. Some 'spoof' covers appeared which resembled the front page of a newspaper such as *The Times*.

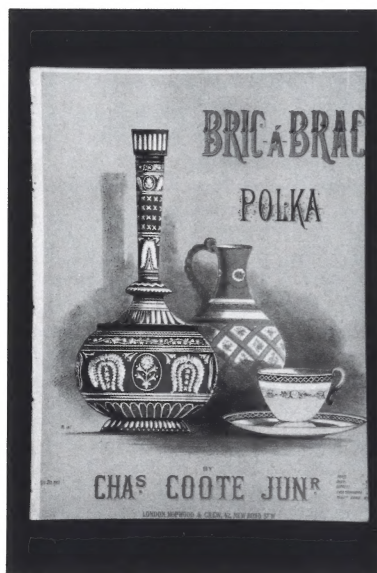
Printed music is fragile and ephemeral and many thousands of titles must have perished through over-use or careless handling, while many others have been thrown away as rubbish. To their shame, many secondhand booksellers cannot be bothered with sheet music, so that it is increasingly hard to find. Fortunately many Victorian music lovers were in the habit of sending a selection of their favourite pieces to be bound in volume form. Many such volumes have survived, often bearing the name-label

of their owner on the cover. It is worth looking in your attic or inside your grandmother's piano stool to see whether it harbours any of these increasingly precious examples of our grandparents' or

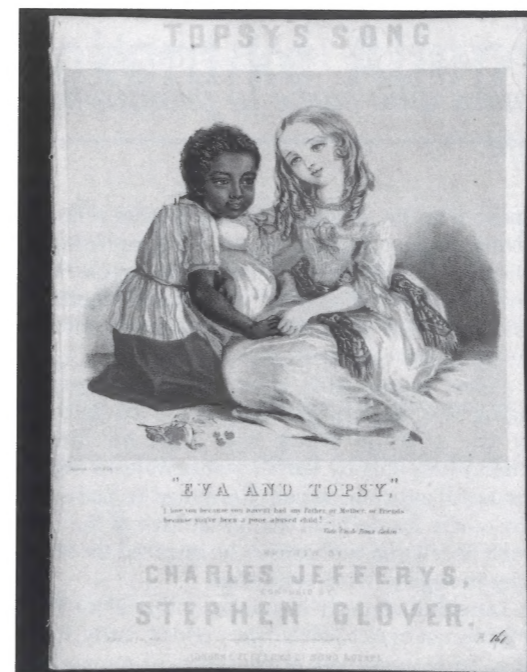
great-grandparents' taste. But don't expect too much of the music! I suspect that in many cases the picture preceded the music as the strongest selling point.



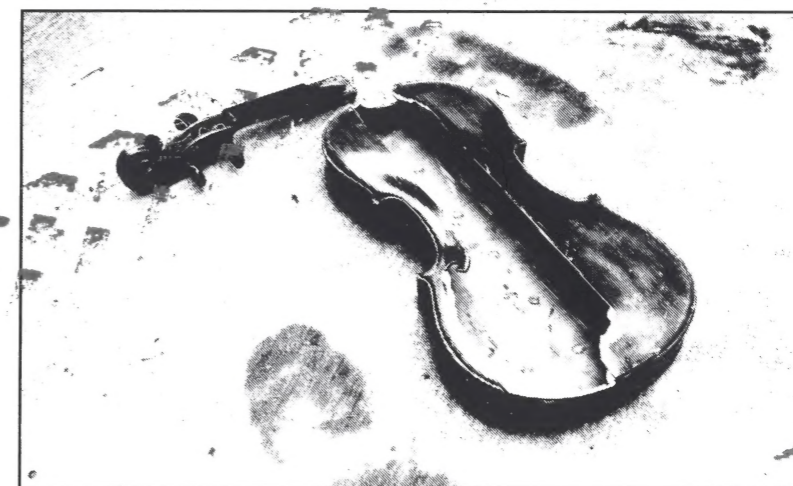
Louis Jullien's cover for Herrman Koenig's *The Bohemian Polka*.



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## Leading by Example

*Few orchestral players can boast the same level of experience as Raymond Ovens, whose career spans over four decades. He's seen the best (and the worst) of conductors in his time, but reserves the softest spot of all for a man who came to prominence late in life.*



*Raymond Ovens pictured during rehearsals for English National Opera's 1986 Proms performance of Wagner's Parsifal, conducted by Sir Reginald Goodall.*

*Photo: Clive Barda.*

**A**s an orchestral musician for more than 40 years – 25 of them as a leader – it has been my privilege to work in some fine orchestras and with some very great musicians and conductors; none, in my view, greater than Sir Reginald Goodall. It was not until he was almost at the end of his career that I played for him, as leader of the English National Opera Orchestra, for a new production of Wagner's *Parsifal*.

Reggie's way of working was unique: I have never experienced any preparation so thorough as for this *Parsifal*. I joined ENO at the beginning of the 1985-86 season and *Parsifal* was scheduled for the second half, yet in the very first week of the season's rehearsals a general play-through of the opera, spread over three rehearsals, was on the schedule.

With the legendary inexactitude of Reggie's beat (it took me some time to recognise that the second jerk of his right hand was not necessarily the second beat of the bar!), and his ability to make the most glorious mistakes (which resulted in furious mutterings at himself), his play-through was like a mystery tour of this most wonderful of Wagner's scores. No matter – Reggie was working at the "span" of the piece and the orchestra was on the path of learning to play it like chamber music.

As the season progressed, *Parsifal* sectionals

appeared on the schedule amongst other rehearsals – strings, or just first violins, or violas, or trombones or harps. Every section was taught by Reggie how to play their parts so that when we all came together we could concentrate on listening to each other and playing the rest of the score.

What Reggie didn't know about playing or singing Wagner was probably not worth knowing, but the strange thing was that he did not communicate this by verbal instructions or even by wonderful stick technique. It seemed to come from somewhere inside him: that great love of the music which he felt and with which he inspired those of us lucky enough to work with him.

Listening recently to a tape of our ENO Proms performance of Act 3 of *Parsifal* – which, sadly, turned out to be Reggie's last appearance – I remembered what an extraordinary occasion it was and how proud everyone was to have been part of it.

He had a great respect for musicians, though it was often disguised with a gruffness of approach – not unlike Sir Thomas Beecham, for whom I played as principal second violin in the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Beecham also had that rare gift of communication – his eyes told you everything. In addition, he possessed a sense of fun and a command of the English language which made rehearsals and recording sessions both an adventure and an entertainment, unequalled since! Beecham, of course, was also a wonderful opera conductor.

Leading an opera orchestra makes many additional demands on a player and I discovered that an experienced orchestra like that at ENO has an innate flexibility that enables it to respond immediately to any change of rhythmic phrasing a singer might make. This degree of corporate flexibility is very impressive; working with a vocal line is an extremely beneficial and worthwhile experience in a musician's development.

Thinking back to my days as co-leader of the Philharmonia, almost all the great conductors I worked with then – Muti, Giulini, Sawallisch, Sinopoli, Ozawa – had, and still have, an involvement with opera, as, of course, did Rudolph Kempe, arguably the greatest technician of them all. I led for him several times with the RPO and can still feel those beady eyes, see the perfect upbeat, the wonderful control of line, and hear the climaxes timed to perfection.

All of which leads back to Reginald Goodall. When I was invited to write about my view from the leader's chair, it was hard to select the most rewarding experience from a long (and happily still continuing!) career, but I think the choice must be working with Reggie, and playing *Parsifal*.

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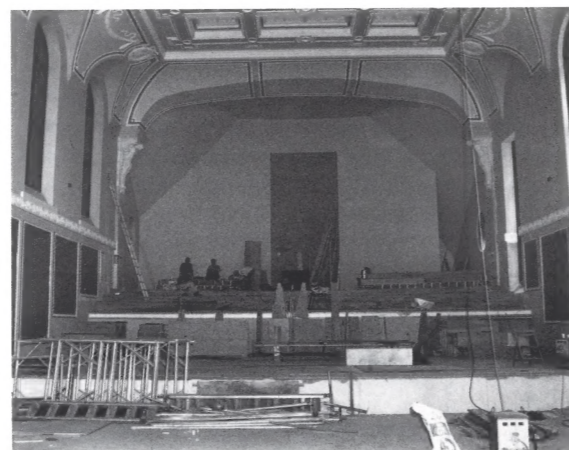
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# Building for the Future

*With new ceiling, raised floor, extended stage and a hundred-and-one other improvements, the Academy now boasts one of the finest medium-sized concert halls in the country. Rachel Wheatley reports on the background to the restoration of the Duke's Hall.*

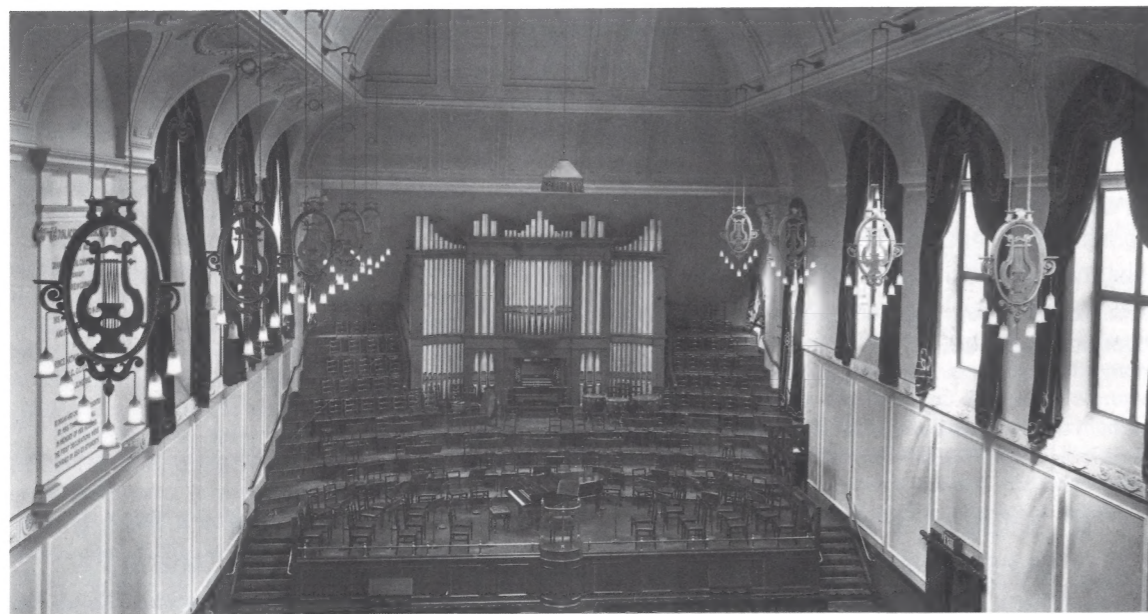
Many an onlooker's curiosity will be satisfied this term with the reopening of the newly refurbished Duke's Hall after four terms of closure. Before describing the changes that have been made to the hall, it seems prudent to set things in the context of a brief overview of the present Academy building. It is comprised of three separate sections, the Regency buildings of York Terrace, the Edwardian building, to which the Duke's Hall belongs, and the 1974 section containing the Sir Jack Lyons Theatre. This last section was built in a void between the other two buildings. There remains still another void for which plans exist to build more practice rooms and a recital hall. Prior to the Marylebone Road premises, from 1823 until 1912, the Academy had been based in the oft-quoted 'dark and dingy' building of No.4 Tenterden Street (see *RAM Magazine* No. 250), and the move to more spacious premises was much welcomed at the time.

The Duke's Hall, so named after the Duke of Connaught, who was once Patron of the Academy, was first opened on 22 June 1912, almost a year after the completion of the 'new' Edwardian building in Marylebone Road. A concert was given, aptly including Beethoven's 'Consecration of the House' Overture together with some contemporary music, including a specially-composed 50-part motet, *Sing unto the Lord*, by Frederic Corder, professor of composition at the time. The occasion was overshadowed by the worsening Balkans Crisis and



the expansion of the German Empire. Prince Arthur of Connaught in his opening speech stressed that while "Music hath charm to sooth the troubled breast" there had been "few ages of the world when such charm was needed more than at present".

Eighty years on, at a cost of £2m, a sum principally derived from private benefactors, the Duke's Hall has been refurbished and adapted in line with today's standards. The original conception behind the refurbishment was to produce a hall which included an elevated stage, fixed seating, boxes to the side of the hall, a bar, catering facilities and dressing rooms. However, the enormous funds



*Interior of the old Duke's Hall, pictured in the 1930s.*

required to fulfil these plans meant that regrettably some of these ideas were curtailed, although some of the more important plans remained, the acoustic ceiling, for example. Whilst a full public entertainment licence has been applied for (this is a legal requirement for premises used extensively for performance purposes), income will also be raised from the Duke's Hall by renting it to professional groups for rehearsal purposes. It is also foreseen that the hall will host charity functions, press and recording launches, conferences etc., which will be served by refurbished bar and catering facilities.

Of the changes that have taken place to the Duke's Hall, two major aspects should prove of interest to the musicians using it: the augmented size of the stage and the improved acoustic.

The Duke's Hall is relatively narrow for a concert hall, being only 45 feet wide, and to compensate for this the stage has been considerably deepened to accommodate large symphony orchestras. (Just to be certain of this, the architects went to the trouble of laying out on the proposed stage area an orchestral seating plan.)

A further problem with the stage in the past had been its height, previously a rather 'unfriendly' four feet. A decision was taken to reduce this to two feet, which meant that the stage either had to be partially removed, losing the valuable archive storage space beneath it, or the whole floor, the stage notwithstanding, had to be raised. The latter option was chosen, bringing in its wake both advantages and a major problem.

On the positive side, the new raised floor allows ventilation ducts and other services to be concealed in the voids and also means that the link from the reception through to the hall will now be at the same level. On the negative side, however, by raising the floor of the hall a cavity has been created, bringing with it the risk of the floor itself resonating, acting like a drum-skin and accentuating the regular rumble of passing underground trains. In this respect the Duke's Hall shares the same fate as the BBC's Concert Hall at Langham Place, both buildings close to the paths of underground lines. To reduce the risk of the new floor resonating traffic noise, it has been built one-and-a-half inches thick, with the supporting walls rested on rubber pads, although, together with the balcony, they would still radiate noise from traffic.

Remarkably, London Underground were persuaded to help alleviate the problem by using long, continuously-welded rails and also resilient pads under the sleepers to ensure that the passing of trains in the Duke's Hall vicinity is as smooth as possible.

The acoustical problems experienced at the Duke's Hall were extensively investigated by Bickerdike Allen Partners, who have been the archi-

ects and acoustical consultants responsible for the refurbishment. A survey of the acoustic conditions

was made to test the improvement of possible remedial options. The main problem of the hall was with the semi-circular vault of the original ceiling, which tended to focus the sound at the front of the balcony, resulting in an unusually loud sound in that area but a distant sound in other locations. The sonic reflections from the ceiling also returned too late to be of any benefit to performers. One is reminded of Sir Thomas Beecham's remark that first performances should always be given in the Albert Hall (before its acoustic was altered) because one was assured of an immediate second performance! To lessen the Duke's Hall problems and disperse the sound evenly throughout the auditorium, a flat ceiling has been built below the vault. One potential difficulty with the new ceiling was that it could reduce the effective volume of the hall, reducing it below the sufficient level required to achieve reverberation.

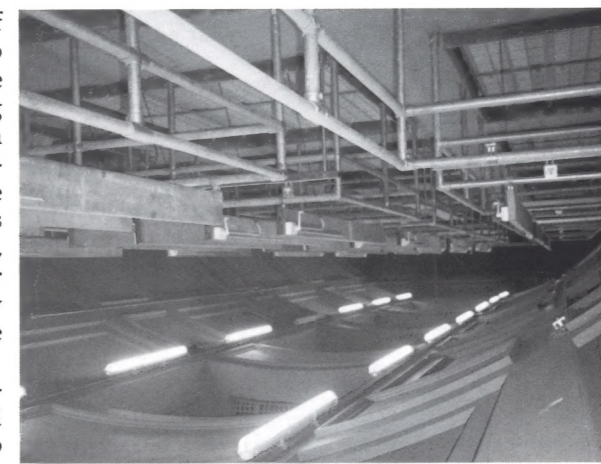
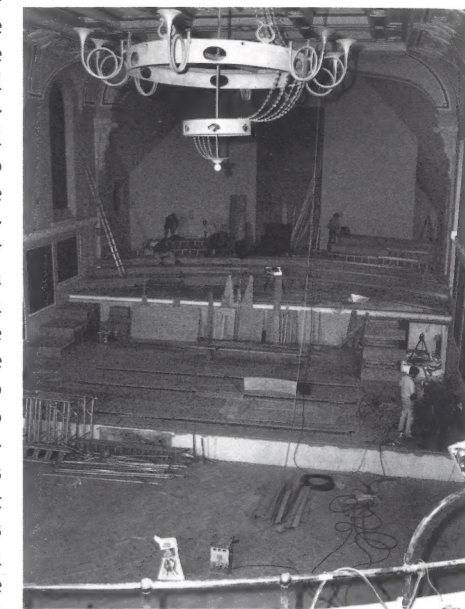
To minimize the effect of this loss of volume, the space remaining above the flat ceiling will be coupled to the main volume of the hall by large openings in the new ceiling. The same ceiling will also serve as a support for a system of high-quality adapted lighting, rectifying another aspect that had been a complaint of past users of the hall. It is envisaged that students will be able to learn about the importance of lighting through the opportunity given to them to alter and arrange the

Duke's Hall lighting themselves.

The improved acoustic and reduced intrusive noise should encourage the hall's foreseen use as a recording studio. Eventually, a control room will be provided in the existing room above the entrance lobby.

Visually, the new hall will give a superb impression to performers and audience alike. With majestic colouring and gilt-work replacing its previous cool whiteness, restored portraits hanging in the panels,

recently-designed large chandeliers based on ideas from older, smaller ones, and a splendid oak parquet floor, the Duke's Hall is set to earn its reputation as the capital's 'classiest' concert hall.



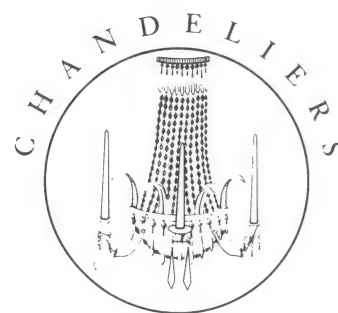
*The space between the old and new ceilings.*

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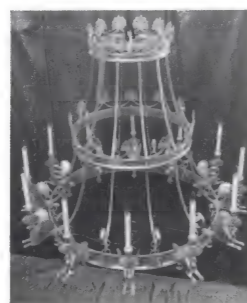
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## Percussion Plus

*Described on her debut as "a quite exceptional talent", Evelyn Glennie has proved that there's far more to percussion than making loud noises. Christopher Huning finds out why.*

Evelyn Glennie is a rarity, even amongst internationally-known solo performers. She has the distinction of being entirely original. Enter that rather tired old maxim about all art being derivative, as true of the performing arts as of any other. Glennie has to a great extent, even if not entirely of her own volition, avoided being derivative. A student of almost any instrument, if they have solo aspirations, inevitably has his or her musical icons, has an empirical background to serve as inspiration or whatever, has a long pedigree to which they can aim to add their own name. But what similar background, if any, does the percussionist have?

She agrees that there is no real history of solo percussion playing. "It has taken a while for the institutions to realize that there is any repertoire. I feel that since I have wanted to be a solo percussionist, they have actually taken some action. Colleges are looking up and saying 'maybe there is something here'." People are now listening to what is being done and thinking "I can do that", suggests Glennie. The conservatoires are now having to expand their outlook. And by the same token, teachers at the major institutions are having to broaden their own knowledge and awareness of opportunities for students. "Whether you believe in it or not", adds Glennie, "not all students are going to become soloists, or even want to be. But nevertheless, at some stage in their life, they will have had the chance to stand up and play just one concerto, or solo piece. This experience is a crucial, crucial thing."

That experience is something that Glennie had to fight for whilst at the Academy, even having to do battle before giving a lunchtime recital, something which might be seen as the prerogative of any talented student. She relates how she wanted to perform a concerto – after all, every student has the chance in theory – but was refused because the hire of the parts would be too expensive, "a disgusting excuse".

There were, however, positive aspects to her studies. "I learned a lot about orchestral repertoire

and playing with others, which is also crucial ... because I had my mind made up to being a soloist. Believe it or not, there is a lot of repertoire, even if it is of variable quality. Most professional conductors would probably be able to name four or five percussion concertos at most. In my library, I have 150 concertos!" Obviously no shortage there, although the works hardly conform to the mainstream of Bach, Mozart or Beethoven.

In 1986 Glennie spent some time in Japan, studying with Keiko Abe, who had a considerable influence on her. "She seemed to take technique and musicality as one. So often – especially with

percussion – you deal with the mechanics first, then think 'hold on, let's put some music in'. It's always secondary. Keiko did the opposite; her approach was to the expression and the ideas, the life of the piece. Suddenly I realized I was playing the piece before I knew it. I had forgotten that I had sticks in my hand, and had forgotten the before I went to Japan I couldn't do this or that."

The Japanese experience has made Glennie think about her whole approach to teaching as well as performing, although the former is limited to occasional masterclasses. She describes

her concern at the lack of musicality in a Shell/LSO masterclass, where the prime concern appeared to be whether or not the notes had been remembered. Such an approach is inimical to her philosophy. As she poetically puts it, "Music is a means of communication. Every piece has its own life. When you start it, it is born; when you finish it, it is dead, although it's only a temporary death. You have to see it just as nature." It is of little significance that Glennie has not been inspired to teach on a wider scale. Her example, what she has done for percussion and for those who play it, is didactic enough.

Her future plans will continue to promote her aims of increasing the popularity and public awareness of percussion. She has recently performed in the Hollywood Bowl; two more recordings are in



the offing; her own BBC series is planned, with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, focusing largely on people who have similarly had to push for acceptance of their chosen instrument. She sees the commissioning of new pieces as an on-going and very necessary thing.

Described after her debut recital as "a quite exceptional talent", Glennie has collected a long list of awards that pay tribute to her uniqueness both as a musician and as a person. Why was her mind made up to become a soloist? The answer is startling: "I didn't really want to be a musician". It was a last-minute decision, taken when she left school at sixteen. At the age of fifteen, she was taking O-levels, and thinking what to do next. "There were many things that I wanted to do, but I really wanted to go in for art." The art world's loss has become music's gain. Of course, Glennie was interested in music and loved it "as a hobby". But she was afraid that if she took it up seriously her enjoyment would be lost, being involved with it 24-hours a day, surrounded by other musicians. She thought that a possible solution to the problem would be to perform as a soloist. "I love performing to people", she says. "I realized that I would have more control over what I did as a

musician, could have control over the repertoire. I would be playing things that I enjoyed; everything would be a challenge." Quite a decision to make at sixteen, but then as she herself says, "I have always been very sure of what I want".

So, in spite of her teacher advising her to wait for a couple of years because she was too young, she auditioned for the Royal College and the Royal Academy, "just to see what auditions were like". Glennie's assertion that she is always very sure of what she wants seems considerably to have coloured her attitude to the RAM. "Even in my first year, I said I would only stay for three years, because I had seen what was happening to third and fourth year students, what they were learning at the

*"It has taken a while for the institutions to realize that there is any repertoire. I feel that since I have wanted to be a solo percussionist, they have actually taken some action."*

time—that was not where I wanted to be." That being? "They were playing *Porgy and Bess*, *Scherezade*, you name it — the orchestral repertoire. But they were doing it for however long they were there .. it really made me question the whole thing. I wanted so many other things to broaden my outlook."

Although she is swift to point out the things positive gained from her time at the Academy, she repeats with passion that what was on offer then "was just not broad enough".

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## Music on the Right Side of the Brain

*The distinguished psychiatrist, Anthony Storr, in an extract from his new book Music and the Mind, analyses the way we receive and 'hear' music.*

Music and speech are separately represented in the two hemispheres of the brain. Although there is considerable overlap, as happens with many cerebral functions, language is predominantly processed in the left hemisphere, whilst music is chiefly scanned and appreciated in the right hemisphere. The division of function is not so much between words and music as between logic and emotion. When words are directly linked with emotions, as they are in poetry and song, the right hemisphere is operative. But it is the left hemisphere which deals with the language of conceptual thought. This difference between the hemispheres can be demonstrated in a variety of ways.

It is possible to sedate one hemisphere of the brain whilst leaving the other in a normal state of alertness. If a barbiturate is injected into the left carotid artery, so that the left hemisphere of the brain is sedated, the subject is unable to speak, but can still sing. If the injection is made into the right carotid artery, the person cannot sing, but can speak normally. Stammerers can sometimes sing sentences which they cannot speak; presumably because the stammering pattern is encoded in the left hemisphere, whilst singing is predominantly a right hemispheric activity.

The electrical activity of different parts of the brain can be recorded by means of the electro-encephalogram. It can be demonstrated that, if recordings of speech are played to six-month-old babies, the left hemisphere of the brain will show more electrical activity than the right. But if recordings of music are played, the right hemisphere shows the greater electrical response. If different melodies are played simultaneously through the right and left earphones (so-called 'dichotic listening'), the melody heard through the left earphone will be better recalled than that heard through the right. This is because the left ear has greater representation in the right hemisphere of the brain. The right hemisphere processes the perception of melody more efficiently than the left. If words are similarly presented, the reverse is true since the left hemisphere specializes in processing language.

It is probably the case that as a listener to music becomes more sophisticated and therefore more critical, musical perception becomes partly transferred to the left hemisphere. However, when words and music are closely associated, as in the words of songs, it seems that both are lodged together in the right hemisphere as part of a single Gestalt. Since the word order of a song is fixed, the innovative verbal skills which belong in the left hemisphere are not required.

Musical gifts are multiple and not always found together in the same person. There is often a wide discrepancy between musical interest and musical talent. Many of those to whom music is immensely

important struggle for years to express themselves as composers or executants without avail. Others who are auditorily gifted, as shown by musical aptitude tests, are not necessarily very interested in music. Teachers of music agree that enthusiasm for music becomes increasingly important for success as a child grows older. Musically gifted children may fail to realize their full potential because their interest in music declines.

It is my impression, and no more than an impression, that this discrepancy between interest and talent is more often encountered in music than in other subjects. For example, those who are not mathematically gifted seldom long to be mathematicians; but musical enthusiasts often confess that their lack of musical talent is their greatest disappointment.

Although appreciation of a musical work necessarily involves perception of both form and expressive content, it is interesting that the two can be artificially separated. Many years ago, I acted as a 'guinea-pig' for one of my colleagues who was investigating the effects of the drug mescaline. Whilst still under its influence, I listened to music on the radio. The effect was to enhance my emotional responses whilst concurrently abolishing my perception of form. Mescaline made a Mozart string quartet sound as romantic as Tchaikovsky. I was conscious of the throbbing, vibrant quality of the sounds which reached me; of the bite of bow upon string; of a direct appeal to my emotions. In contrast, appreciation of form was greatly impaired. Each time a theme was repeated, it came as a surprise. The themes might be individually entrancing, but their relation with one another had disappeared. All that was left was a series of tunes with no connecting links: a pleasurable experience, but one which also proved disappointing.

My reaction to mescaline convinced me that, in my own case, the part of the brain concerned with emotional responses is different from the part which perceives structure. The evidence suggests that this is true of everyone. The appreciation of music requires both parts, although either may predominate on a particular occasion.

In connection with the perception of form and structure it is worth recalling that the auditory apparatus is itself primarily concerned with symmetry and closely linked with balance. The labyrinth or inner ear contains the complex vestibular organ which orients us to gravity, and provides essential information about the position of our own bodies, by registering acceleration, deceleration, angles of turn et cetera. Such internal feedback is needed if we are to be able to control our own movements and relate them to changes in the environment.

It also makes possible our upright posture.

Equilibrium or balance can only be maintained if we are constantly informed about tilts of the body, backward, forward, right or left. A tilt in one direction immediately elicits a compensatory muscular reaction in order to prevent our falling and restore our balance.

From an evolutionary perspective, the vestibular apparatus antedates the auditory system which developed from it. Although the two systems remain functionally separate, the vestibular nerve and the cochlear nerve, which respectively convey information from the vestibular apparatus and the auditory apparatus, run in close parallel.

The auditory system is designed to record the nature and location of vibrations in the air, which we perceive as sounds. Experience tells us which sounds are dangerous or threatening, and which are likely to be harmless. By turning our heads so that the sound in each ear is of equal volume we accurately locate the direction of its origin. Hearing and orientation are closely allied. We are so accustomed to thinking of sight as the primary sense by which we learn how to find our way around that we are apt to forget that hearing can also be used in

this way, as it certainly is by the blind. Repeated visual encounters with a particular area become internalized as a picture which can be recalled at any time and in any place. The tapping sticks of the blind people provide an auditory map of the immediate environment based on variations in sound alone which also becomes internalized as a schema.

Anyone who has experienced sea-sickness or who has been drunk knows that impairment of one's sense of balance and equilibrium is extremely unpleasant. In contrast, anything which increases our feeling of being securely balanced and in control of our movements enhances our sense of well-being. Marching soldiers swing their arms symmetrically as they march; and also march better to music. Music can order our muscular system. I believe that it is also able to order our mental contents.

• *Anthony Storr's Music and the Mind is published in October 1992 by HarperCollins*

## Variations on a Music Therapist

*Music has more than power to soothe the savage breast. It can also help to heal the sick and comfort those with chronic illnesses.*

*Marjorie Wardle lists some of the skills needed to be a successful music therapist.*

**I**f ever I am in an old people's home, and you come and offer me a tambourine to play, I'll get up and crown you with it." So threatened my lifelong friend, who followed my music therapy career with interest, amusement and sarcasm. That was 20 years ago. Now, alas, she is in a home, suffering from Alzheimer's Disease. She does not know me, but smiles and holds my hand passively. Verbal communication is nil, but she sings with me, anticipating each well-known phrase.

There are many misunderstandings about Music Therapy (from now on, MT for short): 'You get people to play tambourines,' 'You choose records for them,' 'You get them to sing,' 'You give lessons.' Yes, all that, in its place, but there's much more. There are as many techniques as there are handicaps; there are as many variations of technique as there are individuals. Some of the relevant techniques are musical, some related to psychotherapy. An ability to write, to put two and two together, and to twiddle knobs, is also useful. The ability to be spontaneous – to allow oneself to throw away a planned session in order to respond to a new situation – is essential. Musically, you need the following gifts:

1. To be master of your instrument. Distractions happen all the time, and you can't be coping with your technical problems at the same time as attending to these. Once I was accompanying a violinist playing Gounod's *Ave Maria* in a psychiatric ward, while a patient was continually kissing me. Another time it could have been a more savage

assault. It is quite normal to be answering anxious questions while playing a piece of music. Whether you carry on playing in such a situation depends on circumstances, but it should not have to depend on your mastery, or otherwise, of technique.

2. To be able to improvise. I don't mean 'improvise in the style of Mozart' or 'extemporise on a given theme'. I mean the ability to create something out of nothing, to give oneself to a situation and allow meaningful sounds to grow out of it.

The meaningful sounds may just be a rhythmical tapping on a chair. I remember this having a strong emotional effect on a patient, merely because it grew out of a situation when we were sitting together in silence, experiencing a feeling of frustrated tension. Sometimes the rhythm of a withdrawn child's name, chanted or played on a cymbal, can attract him or her out of hiding. Generally though, the improvised sounds begin, after a while, to turn into a kind of music.

A depressed patient was using a xylophone, drums, cymbals and a melodica, to try to express her mood, while, at the piano, I accompanied her defensive attempts. Suddenly it felt right for me to play an outburst of joyful music. Immediately the young woman smashed on the cymbal, playing before us in one moment the whole family history: 'clamp down on little, joyful, growing things; they are dangerous'. This was not a breakthrough: the young woman went on being obstructive to her own nature and that of others; but she learnt to catch

herself at it. Now she brings joy to others through her lovely voice.

3. To have a comprehensive repertoire. The more tunes you know, the more chance you have of playing or singing the right one to match the occasion. In an acute ward I once played a Bach aria, knowing that a schizophrenic singer was sitting near the piano. She had been in an almost catatonic state for some time. As soon as I started to play, she joined in, singing beautifully. Afterwards she thanked me for 'changing the numbers' – in other words, helping her out of a psychic situation from which she could not emerge on her own.

4. To be able to transpose, at sight or by ear, into any key. In a ward, a chronic patient begins to sing 'Daisy' or 'Land of Hope and Glory'. After a few notes, you pick it up, in her key, thereby transforming a tentative effort into a memorable occasion.

Tolerance of chaos is an important ingredient in the work, especially with children. I have worked in a school, taking individual and group sessions for free improvisation. The sessions were about 20 minutes long and often contained disruptive and maladjusted children. If you had heard the beginning of a session, you would have experienced chaos; four or five children busily beating the daylights out of a drum or cymbal, while I sat at the piano listening or playing would-be containing chords or glissandi. After a while some rhythm would emerge, and I would manage to combine a melody with it. The children would begin to listen; the rhythm would change; experiments in sound would be made, and everyone would end together with a sigh of satisfaction.

That was on a good day. On another kind of day, the chaos would persist, and it was important for them to see that I could take it, and that they could not destroy either me or my music. Sometimes we had stories with music. The invention of the children threw a good deal of light on the home situation, and the telling of the stories, often in fairy-tale form, seemed to bring some relief.

My work at a psychiatric hospital was even wider

in scope. With individuals and smaller groups, the main tool would be improvisation, as described. With larger groups and wards, the emphasis would be on participation. The patients would be encouraged to sing, orchestrate my piano music with percussion, dance and entertain each other. Wonderful therapy has been done by a girl who rendered religious songs with great sincerity and fervour; another girl affected everyone with authentic songs from her native land.

My colleagues and I have put together dramatic and operatic productions, in which the patients have taken the main parts, or sung in the chorus (having worked and rehearsed). We have given concerts of a high standard, to supply the needs of those who miss classical recitals; and we have given piano, violin and singing lessons to anyone who showed hidden talent and might develop their personality by working on it.

Ten years ago, a painfully shy stammerer was referred to my colleague. She discovered he had a voice, and worked with him for a year or two. He joined a good choir, and became confident enough to date and eventually marry a fellow-chorister. Now he and his wife sing the bass and alto solos in the annual hospital performance of *Messiah*. I have not heard him stammer for many years.

I have not mentioned work with autism or with the deaf, with physical handicap (often in conjunction with a physiotherapist) or with Down's Syndrome sufferers. There are MTs who specialize in all these areas. Nearly all use improvisation in various ways, adapted to the needs of the patient.

• *Marjorie Wardle is an accompanist and teacher. She has retired from St Bernard's Hospital (Hanwell) where she worked part-time for twenty years as a Music Therapist. One of her colleagues was Mary Priestley, whose book Music Therapy in Action (Routledge, Kegan & Paul) has become an established text.*

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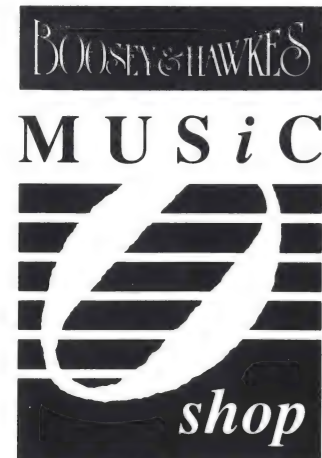
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## Top Brass

*Soloist, teacher, orchestral and ensemble trumpeter, John Wallace has done much to break down the beer-swilling, rough-and-ready image of the brass-playing fraternity. Sarah Galloway talks to the Academy's latest brass troubleshooter.*

Talking to John Wallace, one is immediately struck by his unassuming attitude to success and his refreshingly straight-forward approach to music-making in general. As principal trumpet of the Philharmonia, a highly accomplished soloist, a devoted teacher and leader of his brass ensemble, The Wallace Collection, he is one of Britain's top players, and yet he never actively considered becoming a professional musician.

It was inevitable, says Wallace, that as a boy, he would join the junior brass band at the paper mill in Fife where his father worked. Playing a brass instrument was a family tradition going back several generations. "I wasn't really attracted to it in any way - it was just what my family did."

After about a year as a cornet player in the junior brass band, he was promoted to the senior band, and soon found himself competing in all the local and regional contests.

Wallace recalls how he learnt to play by rote in the band. "We went through a band book and learnt the skills together. The junior brass band master would whack us over the fingers when we played a wrong note."

But he has no regrets about his early training. "I haven't ever done any systematic scales and arpeggios. I've always approached my music through music; most people approach music through exercises, so it ends up sounding like exercises."

After taking Grade VIII at fifteen, followed swiftly by an ARCM, Wallace joined the National Youth Orchestra. Many of his colleagues in the NYO went on to study at Cambridge, and Wallace's

school music teacher recommended that he did the same, although going to an English university was almost unheard of in Scotland at the time. (The majority of Wallace's school friends commuted to St Andrew's or Edinburgh.)

*"I've always  
approached my music  
through music; most  
people approach music  
through exercises, so it  
ends up sounding like  
exercises."*



John Wallace - Man with a mission. Photo: Hanya Chlala.

It was not until he went to the Royal Academy of Music as a post-graduate that he had any experience of conservatoire teaching; it came as a big shock after Cambridge. Not only was he completely unprepared for life in London, but also he resented many aspects of the course, such as the elementary aural and keyboard tests. The only redeeming features, as far as he was concerned, were the two hours each week of individual lessons.

Even at this stage the possibility of becoming a professional trumpeter had not really entered Wallace's head, and he went off to York University to pursue his interest in composition. "I never consciously thought I was going to end up being a player. I had this hankering after being a composer, but the only thing I could make any money at was playing!"

In 1976 he joined the Philharmonia as principal trumpet, but it was not until a few years later that he began to make his name as a soloist. Wallace recognises that the 1981 Royal Wedding brought him into the public eye. "You need a peg to hang yourself on, to set yourself apart from a million-and-one other people who play your instrument", he says, adding that it is virtually impossible to make a solo career as a trumpeter because of the limited mainstream repertoire. The only option is to perform contemporary music, to which he is very committed, both as a soloist and with The Wallace Collection, but he admits that there is not an immense public for contemporary repertoire.

"I realize that a lot of people think that the music I play is tripe", and laughing, points out that he also has difficulty convincing the bank manager, because there's so little money in contemporary music. "But there are always very ordinary people like my mum who love it, and that's not just because she's my mum!"

The demands on Wallace's time are great. He is constantly juggling commitments and coping with tiring schedules, which, he maintains, are challenging once in a while when the repertoire is tried and tested. But he is not prepared to take such risks with new works. "I always like to set aside time to practise to make sure I've done the best for a composer."

It is interesting to discover that in an ideal world, Wallace would spend most of his time working with the brass group, and the rest teaching at a conservatoire. The reality, however, is compromise. He is gradually coming to the conclusion that this is the nature of the beast. "It's never going to be like a nine-to-five routine job. It's total chaos and anarchy in the musical world, and it's up to every individual to find order out of that chaos and anarchy."

As Artistic Adviser to the RAM Brass Department from this term, one of Wallace's aims is to give students the opportunity to find this order. The post, which Wallace gladly accepted, is newly created and

reflects his commitment to the next generation of brass players. The programme will be administered by Michael Purton, Head of Wind and Percussion at Trinity College, who will be working part-time at the Academy. Wallace is keen to raise the profile of brass and his department within the Academy; for too long, both have been relegated to the periphery. He wants to increase opportunities for performance and hopes there will be two or three brass concertos played this academic year. He also plans to start a

performance class to give every brass student a solo platform several times a year. Brass players at the Academy have long complained that there is little opportunity for ensemble chamber-music playing. Wallace intends to address this issue by forming an orchestral-style brass ensemble and also by designating one period each week for brass chamber music. Another important area he wants to look at is the teaching of historical instruments. Over the past decade, this has become a significant area of work for brass players and he is determined that young players should acquire as wide a range of

skills as possible, so that playing in a traditional symphony orchestra is not the only option open to them. Wallace is the first to admit that competition amongst brass players is tough. "In Britain we have more brass players because of the brass band tradition, all of whom reach a very high standard and then think of translating their talent into professional career. We really have to address the vast potential of brass players."

There can be little doubt that young brass players will be inspired by Wallace's quiet enthusiasm and dedication, and that the Royal Academy will greatly benefit from his experience.

John Wallace has certainly not let success go to his head. At one point during our conversation he said, "I'm still amazed that I've managed to make a living out of it!" I think he may have been joking?

• Sarah Galloway is a free-lance journalist and a regular contributor to Classical Music magazine.

## Bridging the Gap

*Performing academics and academic performers have always been something of a rarity in this country. Jonathan Freeman-Attwood, Associate Dean of Academic Studies, reflects on the background to the Academy's radical new BMus (Performance) course.*

There has always been a large body of students at the major music colleges bright enough to enter any university of their choice. Contrary to traditional belief, the problem has not been lack of brains but the lack of a degree programme which makes use of hitherto unchallenged minds and imaginations in recognition of the specific skills needed in today's competitive market. In other words, a course designed to improve performance through relevant contextual study, yet one which never compromises the essential ingredients of success for performers: outstanding technical delivery and a steely nerve.

Historically, one of the problems has been the exclusive division of musical disciplines in this country. Performance and academic music have been traditionally isolated with composition sitting either healthily or miserably on the fence. Hence the university v. college choice for most school leavers has been painfully artificial and limiting. The performers at music college have probably come off worst because they were rarely warned, as a matter of course, that narrow-mindedness would eventually make them vulnerable both as professional performers and as musicians. Universities are only marginally less guilty of over-emphasis, in their case teaching skills that are often devoid of reference to music-making.

There are notable exceptions. Some universities take the performance option seriously for those who desire it but the degree weighting is often on the parsimonious side. This unrealistic polarity between the academic and performing sides of music has not haunted the institutions of North America, Australia and elsewhere in Europe to the same extent as in the UK. Universities in the States and Canada combine musicology, composition, analysis and performance under one roof without, in the best places, compromising standards.

Yet, of course, this is simplistic. Joseph Kerman has shown in *Musicology* (Collins/Fonotana, 1985) that the headings on the prospectus mean nothing if the people inside are writing and playing without any regard for one another. This leading musicologist, with major studies on Byrd and Beethoven under his belt, chastized the academic world by saying that music historians "should exert themselves towards fusion [with the] real world". Performers of course must do the same, and music colleges should encourage students to embrace disciplines that will

enable them to be better informed and more perceptive players. A balanced and cohesive curriculum specifically for performers should encapsulate a philosophy of developing a deeper performing ideal through the breadth of enhancing studies.

Breaking down barriers was not an easy task when the Academy launched its four-year degree course with King's College, London, in 1991, to replace all existing undergraduate courses. Some teachers were understandably concerned that performance quality would suffer at the hands of the 'academics'. When the thoughtful sceptics understood the potential of a true Performance Course, where good playing was awarded a good degree, and each component was immediately relevant, the atmosphere changed. Teachers realized that time was better used in a challenging and rigorous programme, and that it was a fallacy to believe that breadth of understanding meant less concentrated performance. The opposite has already proved to be the case and revealed a latent intellectual versatility amongst many of the new students, reflected in the first-year results.

The ability of 'academic' teachers to present material as an adjunct to performance without forsaking their scholarly and authoritative backgrounds has become crucial. If academic studies

are perceived as belonging to a separate part of a student's musical persona, then the whole premise of a new style 'Performance Course' is misunderstood.

This connection with KCL is central to our thinking. Superficially at least, it would seem extraordinary that a university department of so scholarly a reputation should be associated with such a practically-based degree; one with the philosophy that good performance is degree-worthy. The Centre

For Advanced Performance Studies between each institution, with the BMus (Perf) as its flagship, heralds a new era in the training of high-class performance; by integrating rather than separating practical and intellectual processes of learning, students are becoming fully prepared as never before for the flexibility and demanding standards expected of today's most successful musicians. Such standards are monitored by an examination board of representatives from RAM and KCL, which represents the apex of quality review. This dramatic

*"Historically, one of the problems has been the exclusive division of musical disciplines in this country."*

clean sweep is not just a glorified joint course, but is represented in the new Chair of Performing Studies, held by a musician whose career is noted for the co-existence of performance and scholarship. The ideal for any conservatory is for a degree course to mirror what is happening in the profession, and to change with the musical climate in order that students are given the best possible preparation to make a living as performers. The advantage of a modular degree is that it is flexible enough to accommodate the individual without compromising the focus of a balanced programme.

The main aim of our Performance degree must always be to provide the Principal study with the right 'related studies' to make them integral to the finest playing possible. Repertoire and Performance Practice, for example, lies at the heart of the philosophy of the degree as a hands-on class giving students a broad working knowledge of the practical context of their instruments, through an illuminating exposé of a full range of musical works and issues confronting their performance. Current debates in styles are presented by active professionals in the fields where these issues are constantly arising, promoting an atmosphere where, in the words of András Schiff, "'authentic' and 'non-authentic' performance can live side by side in peaceful

co-existence". Other supporting studies classes are designed, too, to present students with crucial skills in today's musical climate: how to find material, develop critical acumen and use it to good effect, be it for expression in a recital, an edition or a programme note. This is just part of an awareness of the growing concerns in the important area of career development.

*"The new BMus Course is highly monitored, unarguably demanding of a student's time and a tough programme."*

The new BMus Course is highly monitored, unarguably demanding of a student's time and a tough programme requiring careful organization. It is designed for serious vocational performers who want the best chance of success. Although entry to degree courses normally require A-level passes, no gifted performer will be excluded from study at the Academy simply because of lack of A levels. In fact experience has indicated that the

brightest performers usually have the necessary nous anyway. The Academy's philosophy is not one of dwelling on what students already know, but of trying to extract potential from the individual once he or she has arrived at the Academy.

Our first-year students have already shown their seriousness of intent with some fine results, which, in the words of one Head of Study, "displayed a new enquiring mind in performance".

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## Viva Espana

*Time was when those who could not get regular orchestral work in Britain caught the first available flight to Spain. David Johnstone offers an insider's view on recent changes.*

The transition from working as a freelance musician in London to one working in a Spanish orchestra is quite considerable, especially in the case of how a musician is perceived here and what he or she does. There is no freelance scene as such in Spain, save for a handful of players doing sessions in Madrid and, to an even lesser extent, in Barcelona. However, with an orchestral post secured, there are plenty of possibilities for other chamber music and solo work.

In talking of the orchestral world in Spain, one has to bear in mind that, by and large, orchestras are not deep-rooted in tradition; they are more a symbol or representative for the ruling regional government and, in this sense, artificial. (Spanish government entails substantial devolution to the regions.) Thus, orchestras in Málaga, Sevilla (both in Andalusia), Oviedo (Asturias), Valladolid (Castilla), and Pamplona (Navarra) have all reformed in recent years, with former players having their contracts terminated. Contracts are given for periods of one year and are renewable, so Spain is not the place for those looking for instant, life-long security.

It's an undeniable fact that Spanish unions have little biting power, and there is no equivalent of the Musicians' Union nor any other formal organization to protect the rights of musicians; moreover, the musician is partly regarded as a direct employee of the government. Orchestral managers and conductors, therefore, are obsessed by their relations with local government, constantly looking over their shoulders to safeguard budgets and their own highly regarded positions.

I feel that principal players here have less responsibility for and control over their section than their counterparts in Britain; they are often not consulted about finding a replacement for a particular player, though they have every right to voice a complaint on behalf of their section. Managements, in general, encourage members to give chamber music recitals, where that does not conflict with orchestral commitments. Such concerts are certainly better paid than those offered by British music clubs. Given that so few 'soloists' live in Spain, the possibility exists for orchestral players to expand their career beyond the orchestra.

For those that manage to secure a teaching post at a conservatoire, assuming there are no suitable Spanish applicants, the job can become something of a bonanza. One big obstacle at present is the treatment of foreign diplomas and titles by the Spanish musical institutions; perhaps this will change with the advent of the single European market.

New Europe or not, it's unlikely that Spain will ever possess a generation of freelance players able to read whatever's put in front of them and perform it on the same day, in the manner of British musicians.

Self-managing orchestras here are unwilling to take risks with 'difficult' programmes of contemporary repertoire.

The cost of renting or buying a house in Spain remains considerably lower than in Britain, most rented apartments costing between £200 and £450 per month, depending on size and location. For the average Spaniard, the idea of living ten or twelve miles out of town is impossible to comprehend, preferring to be five minutes away from work. In general, the cost of living is lower than in the UK, although the supply of sheet music, CDs and the like is decidedly poor.

My orchestra in Pamplona works about 24 hours per week, which allows plenty of time for hobbies, sport, study or just taking in the sun.

To get offered that Spanish orchestral place is not the soft touch most British players believe it to be. The opening of Eastern Bloc countries has brought with it an influx of technically superb string players from orchestras in Moscow, St Petersburg, Warsaw and Bucharest (to name but four), who would grace any London orchestra. For better or worse, over half the Navarra string section is from the East and this is by no means uncommon in Spain. Good wind and brass players, however, are still in demand.

Home-grown talent is too thin on the ground to satisfy the standard required for the new generation of Spanish orchestras. This is to a large extent due to the antiquated system of music education, offered only part-time at the conservatoires and as a subsidiary study in the universities. The music conservatoire system devolves all responsibility down to local level in the worst possible way, employing teachers without any professional solo or orchestral experience, some barely in their twenties. There is a natural and understandable degree of resentment from native teachers at the threat to their jobs from better-qualified foreigners.

One of the biggest joys of living here is that it's fairly easy to survive in Spanish after only a few months, people in the street wonderfully open and friendly when it comes to helping with the language. English is widely spoken, especially by the young and in all orchestral offices.

The biggest pain of all? Undoubtedly the slow and cumbersome administration system of the Spanish state in its entirety, whether it be immigration, town halls, the police, telephones or whatever. One often finds that the letter or certificate required can only be issued after presenting a number of qualifying documents, and it seems a national pastime to have photocopies officially endorsed by the appropriate office. To obtain these sheets and papers takes time, the very best results achieved only by being very un-British and making a hell of a fuss to get what you want.

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## New Horizons

*Musical snobs have had a hard time of late, with more and more 'serious' performers crossing over into unfamiliar territory. Last month the Academy became the first UK conservatoire to host a degree course in Commercial and Media Music Studies. Course director, Nick Ingman, offers a personal view of its importance to future generations of students, with a little extra-terrestrial help.*

I've always had a healthy scepticism about the factual content of most newspaper reporting, but it was not until I'd read the article that followed the headline 'Rock and Roll at the Academy!' that I realized that most newspapers, however well intentioned, are writing primarily to entertain. Facts and, more importantly, nuances are normally too grey for the instant assimilation required for most journalism. In other words, the truth is normally pretty dull and inexact; it's easier to create labels with which to attract the reader's attention.

That article and the many others that followed several months ago, when the Academy's Commercial and Media Studies Course was formally announced, together with the questions that were put to me by various radio and television journalists, also emphasized how little was understood about this area and how much of an image problem this music has. Without exception, every journalist latched on to the sensationalist aspect of the rock and roll industry co-existing under the same roof as the 'traditional' disciplines of the Royal Academy of Music.

So, why did they (and so many others) get it wrong? And what is Commercial Music anyway? I was recently asked to explain the exact nature of commercial music to a group of young, would-be orchestral players. In an attempt to put the point over I used a simplistic, possibly frivolous example. Imagine, I explained, that a young Martian is sent out from his home planet to write a thesis on the musical habits of the solar system. During his tour he arrives at planet Earth. He sets himself up in a hotel room in a major city and installs a radio capable of receiving from around the world, a television connected to satellite and cable, a cassette player, a DAT, CD and record player. Using this equipment he listens to hundreds of hours of recorded material from all sources. He carefully notes the style, the derivation and structure of the music he hears, and then travels around the world attending concerts in every kind of venue. He walks a great deal, around supermarkets, hotels and city streets; he attends hundreds of theatrical productions and films. The Martian collates all the information and begins to divide the music into styles, often based around the performer or creator of the music. He is fascinated to note that the Earthlings seem to divide the music they hear and play into two categories: what they call classical, or serious or concert-hall music, and ... well ... the rest. He notes that the rest seems to include about 80 per cent of all the music he has heard. Music for television, radio, video, the theatre and, yes, rock and roll. Eighty per cent to 20 per cent is the proportion he notes for listening and buying: 80 per cent this 'other' music and 20 per cent the 'classical' music. He further notes that this classical music seems to consist largely of music written 100 years or so ago, but which is called by this strange name even when it was written yesterday. For his thesis he needs a name for this powerful body of music, listened to by millions around the world, performed with an enormously high degree of expertise and care, and creating in the

region of £30 billion worth of business per year. And that was when he stumbled on the name Commercial Music.

A slight story perhaps, but it demonstrates the scope of the music that is all around us. The Martian might also have noted with some dismay that, despite the 80 per cent preponderance of this commercial music, the educationalists on planet Earth seemed to reverse the emphasis, only 20 per cent of them dealing with this area. The reasons behind this apparent anomaly lie at the heart of the mistaken articles and image problem mentioned earlier. Rock and roll does indeed make up a large part of the commercial world, but why does it permeate this area and why does it have such a bad image?

Apparently in the armed forces it is generally considered axiomatic that one fighting soldier will be backed up by 20 support-system soldiers. So it is in rock and roll. In other words, the fighting soldier – or the performer – is backed up by a whole team of behind-the-scenes supportive 'creators'. These are highly expert, highly trained, highly musical, and in the main highly paid members of the commercial music world. The performer is paid to be attractive, mercurial and interesting to watch; the latter can often mean that he or she will have to say and do things that are anti-social and therefore headline-worthy. These actions are often carefully orchestrated by some of the team already mentioned, but the mud sticks and the image of the performer is perceived as applying to the remainder of the business. In my experience most rock-and-roll performers use their outrageousness like a uniform which they discard at the end of the day before they return to their suburban semis. The tabloids specifically, often in partnership with the publicity machine surrounding the rock stars, perpetuate the myth of 'sex, drugs and rock and roll', and this suits all parties.

The back-up team needs to be of a very high calibre indeed. The performers need no training as such: they are intuitive 'actors' and will either be successful or not. The back-up team, however, does need very considerable training and most of it is received 'on the job' and 'in the field'. In the rock-and-roll business, and elsewhere in the commercial field, these people will need a high degree of musical training; an enormous breadth of musical interest (everything from Blues to Stockhausen); the ability to assimilate new and changing trends, and a tough business and 'street' awareness.

It is this largely untapped area of 'education' that the Commercial and Media Music Studies at the Academy hopes to satisfy, dealing with all levels of commercial 'composition'. Its influence is growing all the time: the days of erecting barriers between styles of music are long gone, both artistically and economically. Any modern musician must take this on board, not just to make a living but to broaden his or her musical horizons. I very sincerely hope that if that same Martian student returned to Earth a few years hence, he would be hard put to categorize the 'classical' and 'commercial' music output on planet Earth. I hope he would just write about 'music'.

## West Meets East

*Most of the world's present problems seem rooted in cultural conflicts of one sort or another. David Lawrence returns from India with a positive message for those who find it hard to live with their neighbours.*

I could not imagine a career as unpredictable as that of a freelance musician. One can work so hard on a project that eventually falls through, then the next day find oneself on top of the world as the result of a simple conversation or chance meeting with a stranger. Recently I spent more than a year trying to organize a choir visit to India, then a few weeks later came an invitation to work with the National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, from a gentleman whom I had previously met at a summer school two years ago! If there is one thing that freelancing musicians can expect with 100 per cent confidence, it is the unexpected.

So last September, just when I was not expecting to receive an invitation to 'represent Britain' in South India at an international festival of music and dance in January, I received just that. It was left to me to finance the travel and as December approached things were starting to look bad on this front. Then, just as I was about to cancel my second visit to this country, the unexpected happened again. Before a performance of *Messiah*, in which I was boosting the tenor section of a friend's choral society, I was given tea by a soprano whose husband works for British Airways. We got talking and, to cut a long story short, only a few weeks elapsed before a ticket arrived in the post!

And so I left on 22 January. The plane took ten hours to travel 6,000 miles. Then, back to reality, it took a further eight hours to travel by road just 200 or so miles to Bangalore (surely even Network South-East could have done better) for the opening concert and ceremony of the second East West Music and Dance Encounter. This bi-annual festival is run by India's third largest music school, the Bangalore School of Music, and brings together artists from the East and West to teach, learn, share and perform in a festival of cultural exchange.

The BSM was founded by the Indian soprano Aruna Sunderlal, who through her devotion and dedication started the school with her own money in 1987 and gave her own home as premises. This is still the situation today, although, now that two international festivals have been successfully hosted, Aruna is confident in her forthcoming application for public funding.

The second Encounter brought many Western artists to Bangalore for eleven days, many of whom incorporated their visit into previously planned All-India tours. Working with such a variety of people was tremendously exciting. There were modern and folk dancers from Moscow, a world music group from Sydney, a Bharatnatyam dancer and lutenist from Paris, as well as a few interestingly mis-advertised artists: the Hungarian pianist was from New York, the 'American' guitarist had spent

fifteen years living in India and was from Canada, the Canadian soprano was of course from America, the manager of the visiting cellist found herself billed as 'musicologist and choreographer' (which she found quite amusing, until asked to give a discussion paper on rhythm in Western Dance). The South Korean trance dancer was, after all, a trance dancer, from South Korea.

Each day the festival offered seminars comparing Eastern and Western traditions and attitudes, as well as teaching courses and two evening performances – one Eastern and one Western concert of music and/or dance. I taught choral conducting, vocal technique, conducted a 150-voice children's choir and, during the week following the Encounter, led a further choral and conductor's course. None of the students had ever studied conducting before, and the children's choir came from five different schools. Normally there exists quite passionate competition between the choirs of Bangalore's schools; this was the first time in Bangalore's history that choirs from more than one school had sung together.

The life of a choral conductor in India is not a happy one. Even if they are fortunate to have friends or family in the Western world who can access music for them, there is still the problem of its cost. A more fundamental problem which is certainly harder to conquer is that many are quite unaware of what choral music actually exists in the first place, so they do not know what to programme or order.

What I really noticed as a result of this trip was how enthusiastic the Indian people are to hear, learn about and participate in making Western music. This is part of a much wider enthusiasm for a richer artistic environment, which encompasses ideas and traditions from more than just one culture. It is not their aim to combine or fuse different traditions, and there is no sacrificing of cultural identity; in fact, cultural identity is highlighted and given a sharper focus from within this broader context, and it is my experience that the participants really are the richer for it.

Our cultural heritage is something of which we should be proud, but I do not think it is naturally superior to that of any other culture, and we have much to learn from the vision of people, such as Aruna Sunderlal, who recognize the benefits of, and need for, cultural diversity.

- *David Lawrence (1990) is presently preparing for future teaching and conducting trips to Mauritius, Zimbabwe and New Zealand.*

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